UNITED
NATIONS

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Economic and Social
Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/1999/110
13 July 1999

Original: ENGLISH

Substantive session of 1999
Geneva, 5-30 July 1999
Agenda item 7 (e)
Coordination, programme and other questions:
calendar of conferences and meetings in
the economic, social and related fields

Provisional calendar of conferences and meetings for 2000 and 2001 in the economic, social and related fields

Letter dated 6 July 1999 from the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences addressed to the President of the Economic and Social Council

In response to the Council's invitation set forth in its decision 1988/103 of 5 February 1988, the Committee on Conferences met on 24 June 1999 to review the provisional calendar of conferences and meetings for 2000-2001 in the economic, social and related fields, as contained in document E/1999/L.18. The Committee welcomed the opportunity to review the provisional calendar of conferences and meetings and to provide, as appropriate, its recommendations thereon to the Council.

In introducing the provisional calendar, the Secretary of the Committee referred to a number of amendments to the calendar. The attention of the Committee was drawn to relevant paragraphs in the preamble dealing, inter alia, with biennialization of sessions, requests for additional meetings or changes in normal pattern of sessions and the ending of sessions eight weeks before the session of the Council. The Secretariat also informed the Committee that, in the preparation of the provisional calendar, due regard was taken of the provisions of paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 53/208, by which the Assembly decided that United Nations bodies should be invited to avoid holding meetings on 9 April 1999 and that this arrangement should be taken into account when drafting future calendars of conferences and meetings.

GE.99-63946 (E)

In summarizing the discussion of the item, the following observations and suggestions were made:

(a) There is an overlap of dates in 2000 of the meetings of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in Vienna (items 39, 41 and 42) with the Commission on Human Rights in Geneva (item 29);

(b) There is an overlap of dates in 2000 of the meetings of the Commission on the Status of Women in New York (items 24 and 25) with the Commission on Human Rights in Geneva (item 29). The Secretariat informed the Committee on Conferences that conference facilities could be made available for the Commission on the Status of Women to meet in New York from 28 February to 17 March 2000;

(c) The Committee noted that the Commission on Sustainable Development in 2000 in New York (item 40) and 2001 in New York (item 38) reflected a session of three weeks' duration. Attention was drawn to the fact that the Commission had been able to successfully complete its work within two weeks in the past few years. It was therefore hoped that the same duration could be maintained for the next biennium;

(d) The issue of annualization of the Commission on the Status of Women starting in 2001 [paragraph 7 (b)] should be reconsidered at an appropriate time in the light of the principle of biennialization of conferences and meetings referred to in paragraph 2 (f) (ii) of Council resolution 1988/77 of 29 July 1988;

(e) Attention was drawn to resolution 1999/44 of 27 April 1999 of the Commission on Human Rights, in paragraph 3 of which the Commission "Decides to appoint, for a three-year period, a special rapporteur on the human rights of migrants to examine ways and means to overcome the obstacles ...". In view of that decision, item 8 (c) of the preamble could be deleted.

The Committee on Conferences expressed the hope that overlaps of meetings related to the same sector of activity could be avoided.

Concern was also expressed regarding the requests of intergovernmental bodies to seek exceptions to the biennialization of their sessions and the Committee on Conferences again wishes to encourage the Council to continue its consideration of the biennialization of meetings of its subsidiary bodies.

The Committee also wishes to encourage the Economic and Social Council to continue its review of the Council calendar as a whole in the context of its review of the mandates, composition, functions and working methods of its functional commissions and expert groups and bodies.

The Committee on Conferences noted that, in accordance with paragraph 2 (f) (i) of Council resolution 1988/77, the Secretary-General would ensure that meetings of the subsidiary bodies of the Council ended at least eight weeks before the session of the Council at which their reports were to be considered. The Committee noted that in the provisional calendar submitted by the Secretary-General, the subsidiary bodies of the Council were, to the

extent possible, scheduled to end their 2000-2001 sessions at least eight weeks prior to the scheduled dates for the Economic and Social Council.

The Committee on Conferences recommends the adoption of the provisional calendar of conferences and meetings of subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council for 2000-2001 (E/1999/L.18 and Add.1), and requests that the Council bear in mind the above observations and suggestions.

In closing, I should like to express the Committee's appreciation of the Council's invitation to review its draft calendar of conferences and meetings, and of the continued close cooperation between the Economic and Social Council and the Committee on Conferences.

(Signed) Peter VAN DE VELDE
Chairman, Committee on Conferences